

## **HERSETH SANDLIN REQUESTS INCREASED FLEXIBILITY FOR PREVENTED PLANTING**

**Washington, DC (July 1, 2010)**—Today, U.S. Rep. Stephanie Herseth Sandlin joined Senators Johnson and Thune in sending a letter to Secretary of Agriculture urging him to grant flexibility for South Dakotan livestock producers in regard to their ability to collect prevented planting payments.

Herseth Sandlin said, “It is critical that livestock producers have an adequate amount of livestock feed for their operations. Due to the ongoing flooding this planting season, producers find themselves in a difficult situation as the available acres to produce feed has been substantially reduced. The flexibility we are requesting in the prevented planting program is vital for the livelihood of our livestock producers as well as important to our state’s economy.”

The delegation letter follows:

July 1, 2010

Secretary Tom Vilsack

U.S. Department of Agriculture

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write in regards to producers who have been severely impacted by this spring's rainfall and flooding on their acreage, subsequently affecting available land for production. Because this rainfall and flooding has reduced the number of available acres for production this year, many agricultural operations won't be able to produce adequate forage for their livestock. We write seeking flexibility for prevented planting coverage restrictions with the goal of enabling impacted operations to produce adequate feed stocks.

As you know, producers are restricted from harvesting or grazing subsequently planted cover crops after the first prevented planting claim until November 1st without incurring a 65% reduction in prevented planting benefits. Additionally, the Actual Production History (APH) for included acres is recorded at 60% of actual APH if a producer harvests or grazes a secondary crop prior to the November 1st deadline. We can appreciate that the intention behind such a restriction is to ensure that mistreatment of program benefits is marginalized. However, we are also concerned that given the tremendous hardships many producers are facing in light of this spring and summer's unrelenting rainfall, some wiggle room in the November 1st date is appropriate this year so as to minimize financial hardships for these farmers.

We believe that some modifications in the prevented planting coverage to specifically accommodate those livestock producers impacted this year by inordinate rainfall would be enormously helpful to ensuring our farmers are not unnecessarily harmed. We suggest allowing producers that won't be able to produce adequate forage for their livestock this year be allowed to harvest feed crops for their operations prior to November 1st without incurring the 65% reduction in prevented planting benefits and the 60% of actual APH yield on the prevented planting acreage.

We thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this very important request.

Sincerely,

Tim Johnson

John Thune

Stephanie Herseth Sandlin

U.S. Senate

U.S. Senate

Member of Congress

Cc: RMA Administrator Bill Murphy